

The Victorian
Seekers Club

JAN / FEB
2026

IN THIS ISSUE:

-Presidents Report

Camp Reports

-Heathcote Camp

-Christmas Party

FOSSICKIN' ROUND

VOL. 47 ISSUE 1

The Victorian Seekers Club bi-monthly newsletter

Melbourne Cup Camp Heathcote



Merry Christmas
from Santa



Token hunt at xmas breakup



Weirdos at Heathcote camp

Your Committee of Management 2025-2026

POSITION	DUTIES	NAME	CONTACT vicseekersclub@gmail.com
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President: Club management and representation, Chairperson **John Wingham**

Vice President: President's deputy, arrange speakers. **Mike Oldfield**

Research Officer: Information about outings, field activity. **Paul Bakx**

Secretary: Correspondence, meetings, camp permits and other administration (Joint role) **Gavin Bell**
Susan Moore
Robert Hatvani

Treasurer: Financial reporting, paying and receiving money, banking **Steve Hillman**

Membership Secretary: Membership enquiries, subscriptions, membership records **Louise McGough**

Newsletter Editor: Newsletter compilation and distribution **Gary Harvey**

IT & Social Media Officers: Website administration & Facebook **Anja McKnight**

Rob Shannon

Catering Supervisor: Supper at General Meetings **Steve Iorlano**
Camps and Special functions **Marj Hillman**

Social Secretary: Organising social functions, raffles, theatre bookings etc **Tina Whelan**

Almoner: Contact on matters of personal nature: weddings, bereavement etc **Susan Moore**

Library Officer: Managing library at General Meetings **Sam Shvemer**

Field Officers: Assist new members at outings, manage campfires, camp signage and any other campsite set-up/clean up duties **Eric Grummett**

Paul Gower

Ivan Albrecht

Tye Sweeney

Brian McGough

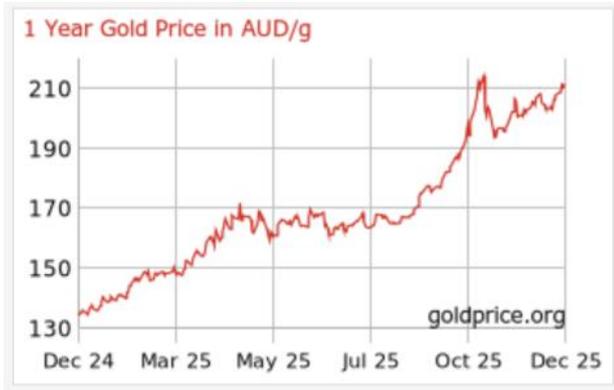
Mujeeb Afzal



CLUB CALENDAR

VSC General Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month (except January) at 7.30pm for 8pm start.

***Mulgrave Community Centre, 355 Wellington Road, Mulgrave. All welcome.**



Gold price per Gram as at 22/12/2025

JANUARY 2026

General meeting No Meeting
Amherst Camp 23rd-28th Jan

(Note new location)

FEBRUARY 2026

General meeting 4th February
Guest speaker from Synchrotron on Nuclear science and technology
Havelock Camp 20th-25th February

MARCH 2026

General Meeting 4th March
Mount Franklin 13th-18th March



THE VICTORIAN SEEKERS CLUB CALENDAR																																		
2026																																		
COMMITTEE MEETING							GENERAL MEETING							CLUB OUTINGS							PUBLIC HOLIDAYS							VSC SPECIAL EVENTS						
JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH							APRIL													
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MONTH	CAMP VENUE						MONTH	CAMP VENUE						MONTH	CAMP VENUE																			
JAN	Amherst (new site)						APRIL	Fryerstown						JULY	OCT																			
FEB	Havelock (TBC)						MAY	Talbot						AUG	NOV																			
MARCH	Mount Franklin (TBC)						JUNE	Chute (TBC)						SEPT	DEC																			
	MOONABEL																																	
NOTES:	Note camp location change for January!!!!																																	
	Nov 3rd Club Cup Day BBQ																																	
	NOTE: November there is no general meeting at Monash Hall. Can have general meeting at camp TBC																																	
	Dec 13th Club Christmas breakup picnic. Venue TBC																																	

President's Report



President John Wingham

Well, it's that time again, when we reflect on the year gone by. To remember friends and family who sadly are no longer with us and to welcome new family and members who have joined us. The club has seen a number of changes this year and as new committee members, I think I can speak for them, in saying that we will do our best to represent the club. Having said that, I am still looking for my first bit of gold! So don't follow my example. Once again there has been a lot of gold found on the various camps throughout the year, lots of small nuggets and some very impressive larger ones. We have some new sites coming up next year, so it will be interesting to see what they produce. And finally, Have a very Happy Christmas and New Year

PMAV

The Prospectors and Miners Association of Victoria (PMAV) has long stood at the front-line in the fight to protect public lands for prospecting and small-scale mining. For decades, government proposals to lock away forests and reserves have threatened the future of recreational and professional prospectors alike.

The PMAV works tirelessly to ensure access is preserved, policies are fair, and the heritage of responsible prospecting is safeguarded for generations to come.

Through lobbying, community engagement, and informed advocacy, the association provides a strong, united voice against unnecessary restrictions. Their efforts have helped maintain open land, educate policymakers, and promote environmentally responsible practices within the prospecting community.

If you value access to Victoria's goldfields and want to help protect the future of prospecting, consider joining the PMAV. Membership strengthens the collective voice that keeps these landscapes open and ensures that prospectors' rights are heard and respected.

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The Prospectors and Miners Association of Victoria is a voluntary body established to protect and enhance the rights and opportunities of those who wish to prospect, fossick or mine in the State of Victoria, Australia <https://p mav.org.au/>

Find of the Month: Mario Sorgiovanni– found King George V Coronation 1911. commemorative medal.

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Our recent club camp at Heathcote was well attended with 23 camps, 41 people plus three day visitors.

The weather started off wonderful. Warm to hot but became muggy and rainy. Sunday night the skies opened up with heavy rain so a few people headed home. The rain continued on Monday so a few more people left us mud dwellers to stay.

Gold was proving to be quite the challenge and all pieces found were very small. Not everyone found gold. Some members went



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By Marj H

panning and Jarrod once again ran his high banker. Specs of gold were retrieved by Jarrod, also by Robert and Katherine, using this method. Gold is gold! And they were rewarded for their efforts. Melissa M also snagged her first gold at a Seekers camp from her panning. Well done!



Early in the camp, a few of the fellas went out to collect some firewood. The quantity collected was substantial and so we didn't have to collect any more for the whole camp. Despite us having quite a decent fire each night. Thank you Guys!

The first Friday night of camp being 31st October was Halloween. A few of us had decided to dress up in costume for this. There were some great costumes, with a late entrant ghost making an appearance. Well done Eric! Hopefully some of you saw the photos on our FB site that were put up by





Robert and Anja. We had spooky lights, spooky food and even some spooky alcohol thanks to "Death" and his coffee flavoured "Departed Souls" shots and Bloody Mary drinks. There were even "Blood Bags" to suck on.

Friday night we also had a presentation to Anja for Her Find of the Year award for the 38+ gram nugget She found last year. Congratulations and well done to you. I can only dream of finding such a nugget.

Saturday afternoon we had a "Stake your Claim" event with cash prizes. First prize went to Shirley S (\$60), second prize went to Rob S (\$40), third prize went to Peter G (\$20) and fourth prize went to Marj H (\$10). Many thanks to all who helped set up and run the event. We then moved over to the campfire area and enjoyed a BBQ put on by the club consisting of local butcher sausages and burgers, onions, bread and sauces. Then



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"pound for pound the world's best pick"

for dessert we had ice cream, sprinkles and fruit salad. Thank you to Shirley S and Tracey H for making and supplying the fruit salad. Thank you again to all the people who helped with set-up, cooking, serving and cleaning up. We had quite a few comments of how nice the meat was and apparently the onions were cooked perfectly! Of course, the ice cream sprinkles and fruit salad went down a treat. I think we are all big kids at heart.



Thank you also to Shirley and Tracey for selling raffle tickets for our Christmas hamper raffle, to be drawn at Wick Reserve Christmas breakup day on December 7th. Really appreciate your help ladies.



Heathcote Camp Report cont...



Saturday night we also had door prizes of gift vouchers. Four were given out.

Unfortunately Eric's wife had a mishap at home and ended up with a trip to hospital and came home in a moon boot. So being the

wonderful husband that He is, He packed up and went home to look after Her. We hope that Bev is improving.

There was another prospecting club camped nearby (Fossickers Club) and had a visit from their President on Friday Halloween night. He had a lengthy visit and seemed to be enjoying the spooky snacks and several of our beverages. He seems a nice guy and Steve has met him a couple of times in the past. The Fossickers appear to be a friendly bunch. A few of our members got a bit muddled when they arrived at the wrong camp and didn't recognise anyone, only to realise they were at the Fossickers' camp and were redirected to our camp just a bit further down the track.

Monday being still very damp and muddy



underfoot, Louise and Brian decided to head home. Knowing it was Louise's birthday (81/18?) so before they left we all decided to go into town to a bakery for a birthday morning tea with coffee and cake and of course a "happy birthday" song.

We had dwindled to only ten camps by now and there was ample firewood so we all convened around the ample fire. Some braved the dampness and went detecting. Others just enjoyed the social time. It was decided not to have "Movember" on the Tuesday as there were too few members remaining at camp. However,



whilst some of the ladies were walking through town they found a fabulous venue for a Cup Day lunch. The restaurant was awesome with fabulous food (and gelati), a good indoor area out of the weather and a big TV to watch the Cup race. We did an impromptu cup sweep for the 14 of us there. Winner was Katherine L (\$30) second place was Shirley S (\$10) and third place was Marj H (\$6). Steve H got last place and got his \$2 entry back.

On the Tuesday we had a lovely day visit from Michael and Kathy D and they joined us for lunch. Michael has been quite unwell for some time so it was great to see them both venturing out again.

Regardless of the elements throwing difficult weather at us and few gold finds, it was another great camp. Thank you to all who came along to make it so. See you next time. Moonambel maybe?



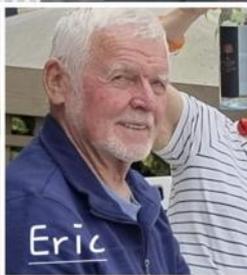
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Christmas breakup & Committee lunch



UPDATE ON VEAC WEST INVESTIGATION

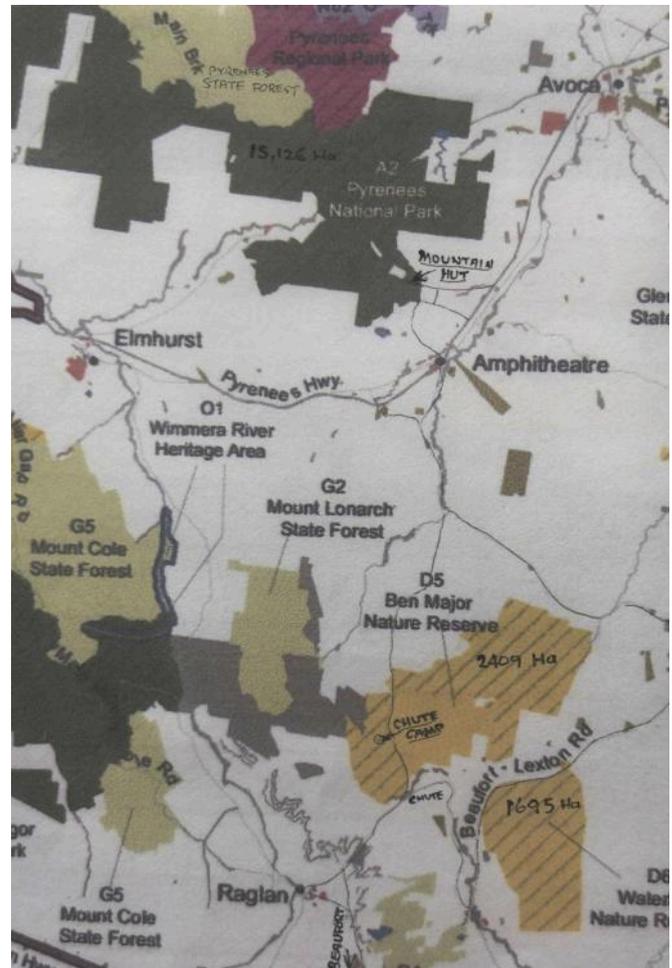
In 2017, the government under pressure from greenie groups, appointed the VEAC (Victorian Environment Assessment Council) to investigate 161,000ha of public land in 3 blocks (Mt Cole-Pyrenees Range, Wellsford near Bendigo, and the Wombat forest near Daylesford) On the 18 November, the Upper House of Parliament approved the Final Report from VEAC without amendments by Labour, Greens and Independents.

What we ended up getting is 73,113 ha of National Parks, and 11,258ha of Nature Reserves. The immediate effect to us is our access to Mountain Hut (National Park) and Chute (Nature Reserve) both of which will disallow prospecting.

After 8 years of lobbying by us, the PMAV, BUGU, and thousands of other bush users fighting these proposals, which involved much letter writing, meetings and several protests on the steps of Parliament, the Green ideology won out on this occasion. I feel that the decision is a payback for the the loss of vote on the proposed Great Forest National Park in Gippsland that received over 40,000 petitions against it.

The final implementation of these new laws is not expected until next October at the latest, so we may be able to squeeze one more outing to Chute in June.

We should not be daunted by this loss as we have won many fights for our rights in the past and there will be more in the future, so it is important to support the PMAV who are leading our war on bureaucracy.



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Thanks to Ken Wilson from Truck Friendly caravan road safety program for this article.

WHO IS THE REALLY TO BLAME FOR THESE CARAVAN CRASHES?

The problem is much bigger than many believe.

Jenny and I came across this caravan rollover on the Bruce highway on Monday 14th July '25 on our way back from the Rockhampton caravan expo.

A 2022 Isuzu MU-X with a GVM of 2,700 KGS was towing a large Urban Tungsten Extreme caravan with an ATM of approximately 3,500 KGS.



Witnesses advised the caravan experienced caravan sway on a slight downhill stretch and rolled the caravan and MUX. They advise that while the vehicle was not speeding it was not going slow either. The occupants luckily escaped with relatively minor physical injuries. See attached photos taken with permission from the police at the scene.

Drivers should be reminded to turn off gas bottles when travelling.

This driver did turn off the gas bottles and the gas hoses were ripped off during the crash. It could have been a very different outcome had the gas bottles be venting gas at the time.

All credit to the Urban caravan that stayed in relatively one piece during the crash. It is a very strong, yet heavy van.

Was all this legal? YES, assuming all weights were complied with.

Is it safe – NO, very basic physics shows the tow vehicle should always be heavier than the caravan in tow.

This crash left the caravan directly across the highway between metal barriers either side of the road over a creek and the MUX left on its side on top of the metal barrier and very nearly falling into the creek below. Driver and passenger were extremely lucky to survive.

As the crash completely blocked the Bruce Highway, we and hundreds of other motorists and trucks were held up for well over 4 hours. Traffic in both directions was at a standstill for 5 – 10 kilometers on both sides of the crash.

While the actual cause of this crash is still under investigation, the police on scene advised they have seen far too many similar crashes.

There was yet another caravan rollover the day before this one just down the road a short way.

WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

While the ultimate responsibility for safe driving will always rest with the driver of the vehicle, we also have to ask where they are getting the dangerous advice and information from.

There is currently a host of what 'should be' trusted sources of information about safe caravan towing that unfortunately recommend or demonstrate unsafe, dangerous and illegal information from.

THE DRIVER.

Every driver involved in a caravan sway crash that I have spoken with have all said, "My caravan was stable until".

Many have driven and towed for many years without incident, then one day a few things that contribute to sway come together to cause the sway and rollover.

The driver has the ultimate responsibility to ensure that they are driving and towing a safe, legal and stable caravan rig on the roads. They must sort facts from fiction. They must ensure that they actually do research and get information from a reliable and trusted source before making any decisions on purchasing a tow vehicle and matching it with a suitable and safe caravan.

They must get education on how to safely load the caravan and towing vehicle, what, if any after market products will help reduce or eliminate any perceived problems and NOT just reduce the symptoms of the real problem. A recognized towing course will assist in giving the correct information on setting up and towing a safer rig. I have yesterday published my thoughts on a towing license, so please read that before rehashing something that will not happen.

Purchase a copy of SAFE CARAVAN TOWING – THE MANUAL from the Truck Friendly web site which provides reliable information on all aspects of selecting and setting up a safe caravan rig.

NO, social media is not always a reliable source. Just because someone has been towing for 20 years does NOT mean they have been doing it correctly, legally or safely for that time. Never take advice from someone who has not actually seen your fully loaded rig. Every van is different and just because someone else does it does not mean it is the right or safe thing for you and your rig. The incorrect and dangerous information that has been shared on social media will cost lives and once the lawyers get involved, who will ultimately be sued for the life and damages, the person who gave the advice, or the administrators of the social media page. Only time will show.

TELEVISION LIFESTYLE SHOWS.

I have received many complaints from viewers that lifestyle television shows, promote caravans and destinations and show caravans being towed down the road without the legally required rear visibility afforded by the correct mirrors.

They show convoys of caravans driving down the roads very closely behind each other without the legally required 60m following distance for vehicles over 7.5m in length. (200m in areas used by road trains).

Some are sponsored by the caravan industry state organizations.

I believe they need to step up and start promoting safe towing practices. A simple comment about the mirrors, safe and legal following distances or other aspects before each trip will go a long way.

Truck Friendly, Governments, auto clubs and others spend millions of dollars on education of caravanners and other road users but these illegal practices are allowed to be shown on television.

What message is this showing to the general caravanning community?

TOW VEHICLE MANUFACTURERS.



We have all seen vehicles being advertised on television for their plated large towing capacities with videos of them towing large caravans without the legally required rear visibility from towing mirrors.

They are advertising vehicles illegal to be on the roads.

The Governments turn a blind eye to the ridiculous towing capacities offered by some of these vehicles. There is this fixation on the magical 3,500 kg towing capacity.

While the vehicle may have the power, chassis and braking to tow a large trailer, they neglect the most basic physics aspect of all safe towing in that the fully laden towing vehicle should always be heavier (with a safety margin) than the caravan or trailer under tow.

A (maximum weight) 2,700 kg GVM vehicle should NOT be towing a huge 3,500 kg ATM caravan.

While on a nice smooth road it may seem OK, once you get into an emergency situation you will quickly wish the heavy caravan did not push the lighter car around and overturn it.

It is undeniable that a heavier object will push a lighter object around. It is very basic primary school physics. Sumo wrestlers are heavy for a reason. Bowling balls are heavy for a reason.

In many jurisdictions there are laws that prohibit the towing of a trailer / caravan more than 1.5 times the 'UNLADEN' weight of the towing vehicle or similar, unless a towing capacity is set by the manufacturer. Unladen is the Tare weight.

The MUX for example has a Tare weight of 1,975 kgs, meaning it should only be towing a caravan with a max weight of 2,960 kgs, NOT the 3,500 kgs plated BTC.

It is very easy to see that the marketing people seem to ignore the safety aspects and only look at sales dollars.

It is extremely foolish to tow a heavy caravan with a lighter tow vehicle in my opinion.

These comments are about light vehicles towing with an overhung hitch, so please don't mention the semi-trailers as they are a completely different towing set up with very different physics involved.

THE DEALER

While the vast majority of dealers and salespeople are great, helpful and give good and safe advice, there are those that let the industry down. Many fly-in salespeople at caravan expos have a bad reputation for incorrect information and providing incorrect advice. Always try and deal with a direct employee of the company who may be proud of the dealership's reputation.

Two vans for example, were reported to have been sold in WA

at well over 400 kgs on the hitch after the salesperson upsold slide out kitchens and storage boxes with the new vans. The vans were overweight for the hitch, the caravan, the tow vehicles, tow bars and other items. The salesperson had no regard for the legal and safe aspects of the van once sold.

Why do the dealers not offer a caravan weight certificate on the day of delivery. I recommend that you insist on one as a buyer. Some dealers now offer this.

It is good for the dealer, proving the caravan was safe and within weight when it was handed over. It is good for the buyer who is accurately informed as to the actual weights of the caravan they just bought, and they don't rely on inaccurate plated Tare weights to do calculations.

Caravan dealers can show a duty of care to them by providing information on safe towing practices and setting up a safe towing rig. This can be in the form of vouchers for a towing course or simply providing a copy of SAFE CARAVAN TOWING – THE MANUAL as part of their welcome pack with each sale.

JAWA Campers shows they are customer safety focused and now offer a copy of SAFE CARAVAN TOWING – THE MANUAL to their customers with each sale.

THE CARAVAN AND CAR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS. Caravanning Qld would be one of the leading State industry associations in providing safe towing information with their Van Safe program and free caravan weighs in conjunction with Qld Govts TMR. They are to be congratulated for these programs.

Other states should follow this example and provide caravan safety information for the benefit of their members customers.

Many industry organisations can be a part of the problem, not the solution. They should encourage members to promote safe towing practices, not just sell more product to them.

THE GOVERNMENTS.

The Governments, State and Federal and their organisations also need to stop sitting on the fence.

They allow illegal, and misleading information to be advertised and be promoted on television without stopping it, yet spend millions trying to fix the problems it creates. They spend millions on safe driving education but allow the big end of town to show illegal practices in the name of advertising and entertainment.

They need to pick a side and enforce it. If that advertisement is showing illegal activities, then fine the advertiser and use the money to help provide the correct information.

The drivers see this information and treat it as normal driving and don't get told it is wrong.

This needs to change.

More needs to be done on education for safe caravan towing practices. Have education sessions in caravan parks and other locations where caravanners gather.

Have Government sponsored safe towing videos available for caravan clubs and free on the internet for all caravanners.

Caravan dealers can also provide a copy on their web sites or USB with each caravan sold.

SUMMARY

Let's ALL work together to help ensure the people buying and using caravans have the best education available.

Drivers need to be able to find reliable and correct caravan safety information from all these sources and be encouraged to search, read and understand it.

I welcome your thoughts on education of the caravan community.

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<https://www.truckfriendly.com.au/safe-caravan-towing-the.../>



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Almoner's report

By Susan Moore

Please contact me on 0412 428 479 or suziem99@hotmail.com if you think a card should be sent to a member regarding a health matter, a significant event such as big birthday, birth, death etc. Please advise if the member would prefer the matter not publicised.

Club Apparel

<https://shop.fullypromoted.com.au/TheVictorianSeekersClubInc>



The Victorian Seekers Club Inc. (Reg. No. A0001477T)

Postal:

PO Box 15
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Email:

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Website:

<http://www.victorianseekersclub.org.au>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Victorian-Seekers-Prospecting-Club-1985818041670592/>

The purposes of the Club are to:

- Promote the skill of prospecting using metal detectors and other suitable equipment in the search for gold, other precious metals, minerals, gemstones, coins, artifacts and relics.
- Encourage and foster friendship and co-operation amongst people interested in the above pursuits.
- Collaborate with other similar clubs and organizations.
- Hold meetings, lectures, demonstrations, field outings and competitions for the furtherance of members' prospecting skills and experience.
- Engage in fund raising activities for the bona fide purposes of the Club.
- Encourage all members to act in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, and in accordance with the Law.

Our prospecting activities are governed by a code of conduct as laid out in the Club Rules including respecting owners of private property and respecting the natural environment, hence our motto: "SEEK BUT DON'T DESTROY"



Public Dump Points

Members are reminded that human waste is not to be dumped in the bush but is to be disposed of at home or a Public Dump Point. Here are some that are in our areas of the camps:

- Ararat Dump Point: 4 Alexander Ave. Ararat , Grid Ref. 37:16:49.7S, 142:56:0.8E
- Avoca Dump Point.
Located outside Acoca Caravan Park in Faraday st
- Bendigo Showground Public Dump Point: 42A Holmes Rd., North Bendigo, Grid Ref. 36:44:18.3S, 144:16:17.5E
- Beaufort RV Dump Point
25 Lawrence st, Beaufort. Entry from Havelock st
Easy access for large rigs
- Clunes Public Dump Point : 70 Bailey St., Clunes,
Grid Ref. 37:17:38.1S, 143:46:51.2E
- Dunolly Dump Point
Maude st Dunolly.
Shared use with privately run Dunolly Caravan Park
Enter through gate at Maude st.
- Harcourt Public Dump Point 6 Bridge St., Harcourt,
Grid Ref. 36:59:40.3S, 144:15:45.3E
- Kyneton Mineral Springs Stopover: 219 Burton Ave., Kyneton, Grid Ref 37:14:7.1 S, 144:25:9.1 E
- Newstead Racecourse Dump Point
McNabb Rd, Newstead. Open 24 hours
- Maryborough Goldfields Reservoir
Reservoir rd, Maryborough. Drive through
- Seymour Public Dump Point: Cnr. Wallis & High St.,
Seymour, Grid Ref. 37:1:14.6S, 145:8:6.0E
- Tarnagulla Recreation Reserve, Tarnagulla.
Gold Coin Donation.



Support the group that is protecting your rights to enjoy the bush - The BUGU - and buy a car sticker from Eric for only \$2. Also attend the protest rallies that show other that we care about access to the bush. Get them from Eric Grummett.

